United Nations

Daily Highlights

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council, in Presidential statement last night, condemns military attacks by Bosnian Serb forces against safe area of Gorazde; deplores reports of ethnic cleansing in Banja Luka and Prijedor and calls on all parties to respect safe areas.

+ Secretary-General expresses grief at deaths of Presidents of Burundi and Rwanda in Kigali air crash; three United Nations observers killed in city.

+ Secretary-General condemns attack on passenger bus in Israeli town of Afula; says outrageous incident should not be allowed to impede negotiations between Israeli Government and PLO.

+ Concluding visit to Belarus, Secretary-General departs for Geneva; tells Minsk Academy that world cannot afford to write off United Nations because of new threats in wake of cold war.

+ Security Council should extend UNIKOM mandate for one year to help maintain stability on Iraq-Kuwait border, Secretary-General says.

+ Secretary-General extends mandate of Special Envoy for Tajikistan for three months to assist forthcoming national reconciliation talks.

+ Secretary-General appoints ten members of Council of University for Peace.

+ Human Rights Committee to eliminate summaries of debate on States' reports from annual report to General Assembly.

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The Security Council has strongly condemned military attacks by Bosnian Serb forces against the safe area of Gorazde. It demanded an immediate end to attacks against the city and called on all parties to respect safe areas. In a statement read out by its President, Colin Keating (New Zealand) last night, the Council also deplored reported acts of ethnic cleansing in Banja Luka and

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Prijedor. It reaffirmed that the International Tribunal established under resolution 827 (1993) would investigate such crimes and try persons accused of committing them. It further stressed the importance of full compliance with international humanitarian law throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Council welcomed the strengthening of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Gorazde amd the impending visit of the Force Commander for Bosnia and Herzegovina to assess the situation in the city. It called for a negotiated resolution of the conflict, an immediate cease-fire, the cessation of hostilities and an exchange of prisoners.

Also last night, the Council President expressed profound sorrow at the deaths yesterday of Cyprien Ntaryamira, President of Burundi, and Major-General Juvénal Habyarimana, President of Rwanda. He noted that the Presidents had lost their lives tragically while pursuing efforts to restore peace to their countries.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has expressed profound grief at the deaths of President Cyprien Ntaryamira of Burundi and President Juvenal Habyarimana of Rwanda in an air crash in Kigali last night. In a statement issued in Belarus yesterday, he said he had conveyed his condolences to the families of the Presidents and to the peoples of the two countries.

The Secretary-General said he had instructed his Special Representative in Rwanda and the Force Commander of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) to provide all possible assistance to the authorities in their efforts to establish the facts in the deaths of the two Presidents.

A United Nations spokesman today announced that three United Nations military observers from Belgium had been killed in unrest in Kigali, and described the situation in the city as confused and dangerous. The Secretary-General's Special Representative and the Chief Military Observer in Rwanda were attempting to form a peace committee involving the parties and the security forces with a view to restoring order, he added. Meanwhile, the situation in Burundi was said to be relatively quiet and calm.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has strongly condemned yesterday's attack on a passenger bus in the Israeli town of Afula, in which several civilians were killed and dozens, including young children, were wounded. The Secretary-General extended his condolences to the bereaved families, and expressed hope that the outrageous attack would not be allowed to impede the ongoing negotiations between the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today concluded his official visit to Belarus and departed for Geneva, where he was scheduled to meet with the High Commissioner for Human Rights. According to a United Nations spokesman, they will discuss sending a mission of good will to help solve the problems of minorities in the Baltic States. The Secretary-General had earlier considered the question of the region's minorities with the Governments of Belarus and the Russian Federation, the spokesman noted.

Addressing the Academy of Sciences in Minsk yesterday, the Secretary-General said the United Nations had become a victim of "an excess of credibility" after the end of the cold war. Those high expectations had given way to disillusionment, but the world could not afford to write off the Organization. The challenge was to adapt to new threats while retaining the solidarity of the United Nations system.

International peace and security were still in constant danger, but State sovereignty was threatened not so much by superpowers from without, as by troubles from within, the Secretary-General told the Academy. He stressed that those threats could not be met without a clear framework of international cooperation. With the priceless asset of the Charter, its universal membership, and its unique experience and connections, the United Nations was the only global instrument to solve global problems, he concluded.

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The Security Council should extend the mandate of the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) for one year, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In a report to the Council dated 4 April, he said the Mission helped to maintain stability in the demilitarized zone along the Iraq-Kuwait border, noting that tension persisted and that full peace had not been restored in the area.

The Secretary-General said the relocation of Iraqi nationals and their assets to their country had resolved the main issue arising from the demarcation of the Iraq-Kuwait boundary. He called on the two States to ensure the safety of United Nations personnel and to prevent any violations of the demilitarized zone.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has extended the mandate of his Special Envoy for Tajikistan for three months to the end of June in order to help the Tajik Government and opposition resolve their differences. In a report to the Security Council dated 4 April, he said it would also be necessary to extend the mandate of a small group of United Nations officials in the country to support the Envoy's activities.

The Secretary-General welcomed the decision of the Tajik parties to begin a political dialogue on national reconciliation. He said he had instructed

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his Special Envoy to invite the parties to a first round of talks to be held in Moscow. He had also added a new provision to his Envoy's mandate, at the request of the parties concerned, to provide good offices during the talks.

The Secretary-General stressed that the Tajik people now had a chance to close a tragic chapter in their history and to prevent further bloodshed. He would recommend that the Council respond positively to any reasonable request for appropriate international monitoring mechanisms, he added.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today announced the appointment of ten members of the Council of the University for Peace. They are: Grace Alele Williams (Nigeria); Hans Dietrich Genscher (Germany); Cyrus Vance (United States); Dharma Kumar (India); Enrique Iglesias (Uruguay); Francis Deng (Sudan); Alfonso Escamez (Spain); Javier Pérez de Cuéllar (Peru); Thierry de Montbrial (France); and Georges Abi-Saab (Egypt).

The University for Peace, located in Costa Rica, was established by the General Assembly in 1979 as a specialized international institution for post-graduate studies, research and dissemination of knowledge specifically aimed at training for peace.

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The Human Rights Committee yesterday decided to eliminate summaries of its consideration of States parties' reports from its annual report to the General Assembly. Expert members agreed that eliminating the summaries would help focus attention on the Committee's comments and recommendations, speed up publication and ease the burden on the Secretariat.

The Committee also approved a recommendation that the report include a more comprehensive and systematic version of its comments. Summary records should be produced promptly and made more widely available to the media and States parties, it decided.

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